

Foster leader guilty on 2 counts

George Allen Goolde receives 50 years for the molestation of 2 boys in his care.

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Body

DeLAND -- The two little boys dressed in black suits and bow ties told the jury about their routine: a prayer, an occasional story, a back rub and then, sometimes, the man would fondle them.

George Allen Goolde of Orange City said he was doing what he thought the boys wanted.

But the jury of five men and one woman said Tuesday that what Goolde was doing was a crime.

It took them 25 minutes to convict Goolde on two counts of lewd or lascivious molestation.

Circuit Judge James R. Clayton immediately sentenced the 62-year-old Goolde to 25 years in prison on each count, for a total prison stay of 50 years.

Goolde faces another trial on a third charge of lewd or lascivious molestation involving a third boy.

During the daylong trial Tuesday, the state argued that Goolde, the former president of the Volusia/Flagler Foster-Adoptive Parent Association, molested the boys many times over a year.

The defense said Goolde was only following the boys' lead and was afraid of rejecting the youngsters who already had issues bonding with adults.

Both boys, now 8 and 11, testified about the activity once the lights went out.

"He would just like rub our backs," the older boy said. The fondling followed, he said. The Orlando Sentinel is not naming either of the boys because they are victims of sexual abuse.

Goolde, who testified in his own defense, said he never went to the boys with the intention of touching them. He said he was never aroused by the activity.

"Did you have any sexual motivation in doing it?" defense attorney Richard Jackson asked.

"No," said Goolde, who has described himself as a "man of God."

"Did you have any lewd intent in touching . . . ?" Jackson asked.

"No," Goolde said.

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He said the boys had a difficult time dealing with rejection and he was afraid if he stopped it would throw them into a fit.

Under cross-examination, Goolde admitted he never told his wife or any of the counselors the family had seen about the fondling. He said he was embarrassed by it.

Because Goolde admitted to touching the boys, the case centered on whether the act was lewd or lascivious. The state had to prove the touching was wicked, lustful, unchaste or sensual.

Assistant State Attorney Heatha Ogle argued for the state that Goolde was the adult and should have known better. She said the boys said they never initiated the touching, but even if they did, that was no excuse for Goolde.

Jackson, who showed evidence of his client's low testosterone levels and dying sex drive, warned jurors they should not make the assumption that touching means a crime was committed.

"That's a mistake," he said.

Jurors declined to comment as they left the courthouse after the verdict was read.

Goolde showed no reaction when he learned his fate, and his wife, Kay, who sat in the gallery, only shook her head. His attorney would not comment.

Ogle said she was satisfied with the outcome for the two young victims.

"I'm glad that they can finally have some justice," she said.

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Graphic

PHOTO: **GEORGE ALLEN GOOLDE**: He says he didn't want the boys to feel rejected. He faces another trial in conduct with a 3rd boy.

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